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Michigan United Conservation Clubs

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Conserving, Enhancing and Protecting Michigan's Natural Resources and Outdoors Heritage since 1937.



Thursday, April 14, 2011

Senate Committee on Outdoor Recreation & Tourism, Sen. Goeff Hansen, Chairman

Testimony of Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)

Re: House Bill 4111 – Authority for DNR to appoint volunteers

Dear Chairman Hansen and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity today to support House Bill 4111, which the sportsmen and women of Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) believe is a piece of common sense legislation that will enable volunteers to help further improve the recreational value of Michigan's natural resources during this time of limited financial resources.

House Bill 4111 will authorize the Department of Natural Resources to appoint volunteers to facilitate responsibilities for the Department under Section 503 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. This authority will enable the DNR to form working partnerships with willing volunteers and conservation groups – our members – to fulfill a number of beneficial tasks such as improving wildlife habitat on state game areas or revitalizing fish habitat with stream bank restoration.

With new and exciting partnerships between state agencies and conservation organizations such as the Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative, House Bill 4111 will help pave the way for positive cooperation between the DNR and the sportsmen and women of Michigan to further restore and enhance hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities for current and future generations. The Initiative is an example in itself of a partnership effort to improve grassland habitat for pheasants and other game birds, which could make Michigan a top attraction for small game hunting. However, this Initiative will require significant support from volunteers to conduct habitat work on state land. House Bill 4111 will allow the Department and willing volunteers accomplish mutual goals for improving small game hunting in the Michigan.

In addition to allowing volunteers to improve game and fish habitat under the Department's supervision, HB 4111 will authorize the Department to utilize volunteers for other tasks that improve customer service, access and conservation.

On behalf of the 42,000 members and 250 affiliated clubs of MUCC, "thank you" again for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 4111 – a common sense policy for sportsmen and women in Michigan.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Nyberg
Legislative Affairs Manager